

New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

SAU 13

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Visit Conducted on:

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New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

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Students with Disabilities

(Commendations, Citations and Suggestions for each school)

Note: It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.

New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

SAU 13

I. INTRODUCTION:

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval visit was conducted at SAU 13 comprised of the following schools: Freedom Elementary School, Madison Elementary School, Kenneth A. Brett School and Kennett Junior/Senior High School. The visiting team met on March 2-3, 2000 in order to review the status of special education services being provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the teaching certifications of special education staff, analysis of SPEDIS data and random inspection of student records. Interviews were held with the Special Education Director, building principals, regular and special education teachers, related service personnel and administrators as time and availability permitted. In addition, the team conducted parent interviews via telephone. Throughout the visit, the team had full cooperation from the school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report that you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of the visiting team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the NH State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that there were no citations of noncompliance to the Standards found in that particular area.

II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE: *Conducted on March 8, 1993*

After reviewing the previous program approval report and the materials submitted for the 2000 visit as well as conducting reviews at each school in SAU 13, it was determined that the majority of the citations in the 1993 report have been resolved. The findings by the program approval team during this March 2000 visit identified citations related to individual education plans (IEPs) and oversights in paperwork compliance as dictated by the 1997 IDEA Federal Special Education Regulations, rather than major compliance problems. The visiting team also noted that there was ongoing evidence that the SAU is in the process of providing training to staff and updating paperwork to reflect the new requirements, and that staff are working hard to implement these changes. Upon further review of the 1993 program approval report and the citation regarding staff credentials, the visiting team was pleased to note that there are now several staff within the school district that currently hold endorsements in the area of learning disabilities. Directly related to this citation, is the need to ensure that there are teachers within the SAU who hold endorsements in the area of mental retardation; for this reason the citation has been noted as not yet resolved. Overall, SAU 13 has demonstrated continuous program improvement and a genuine attempt to address all of the citations noted in the previous program approval report.

III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Throughout SAU 13, there is an overall commitment toward meeting the needs of all students. It was evident that both general and special education staff and administration are dedicated, caring, child-centered and supportive of special education. After visiting each of the schools within SAU 13, the consensus of the program approval team was that only a few issues of significance in special education programming warrant attention.

The first issue noted was related to oversights in paperwork compliance, as mentioned in the previous section of this report. The team found a wide variety of quality programs available to students, yet a lack of evidence to reflect this in student records. In addition, it should be noted that the visiting team identified the need to ensure that complete files are maintained for students placed out of district, as well as for those students who move into SAU 13. The team consistently noted missing documentation of required special education paperwork in files for students placed outside of SAU 13 and for those students who moved into the school district from other SAU's or private schools. Based on this finding, SAU 13 is strongly encouraged to pursue the receipt of required paperwork and take direct responsibility for documenting efforts made to obtain necessary records.

Closely related to the above mentioned issue are problems cited at Kennett High School, where SAU 13 students attend high school. The visiting team noted several issues of concern at Kennett High School. Specifically, the team determined that the space available for special education programming was insufficient and there was a lack of adequate supplies, materials and equipment to implement IEPs. The review team would strongly encourage SAU 13 to work with Kennett High School and strengthen lines of communication in order to resolve the citations outlined in the report that follows.

Lastly, the visiting team noted that throughout SAU13 there are significant issues related to available space and crowding in each of the schools. This was especially evident at the Madison Elementary School, where the team found inadequate space for the provision of special education services, for conducting evaluations and for holding required meetings.

In conclusion, it was evident to the visiting team that staff, administration and parents in SAU 13 feel confident that staff and administration are strong advocates for students. The visiting team would like to commend SAU 13 for its commitment and willingness to address the needs of all students and for the provision of quality services within each of the schools.

IV. COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS: SAU-WIDE

Name of Program(s) Visited: All

COMMENDATIONS:

- The Special Education Director is a strong advocate for students' educational needs and is actively involved with all of the schools in the SAU.
- The Superintendent, the School Board and building administrators are commended for their support of quality services for all students.
- The special education staff in the SAU are dedicated to supporting students' educational needs in the least restrictive environment.
- The parents in the SAU are pleased with special education services and with the dedication of staff and administration to their students.
- Special education caseloads are of a manageable size (10-15 students) which enables teachers to focus their efforts on services and instruction.
- The SAU administration supports and encourages professional development for all staff.
- The Special Education Director conducts weekly special education staff meetings at each school in the SAU.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1119.03 Upon review of a student's record at Kennett High School, it became apparent that some students are not receiving full access to the general secondary education curriculum at Kennett High School. This is due to scheduling problems as the Academic Support class is scheduled at the same time as the Physical Education class. This prevents the student from attending both classes regularly; the student usually attends Academic Support in place of Physical Education.

Ed. 1119.04 The Expeditions (Behavior Management) program at Kennett High School does not currently have a computer available for student use, although it is a required component in an SAU 13 student's IEP.

Ed. 1119.06 The location and physical space of the Expeditions (Behavior Management) program at Kennett High School is not sufficient for the provision of special education services. It is located far from the general classrooms in the basement of the high school and the physical space is unsafe, with potential safety hazards in the program's classroom as well as in the time-out room.

The Language Arts resource room at Kennett High School is located in a space which is insufficient in size for the provision of special education services and implementation of IEPs.

The physical space in the Madison Elementary School is not adequate for the provision of special education services.

IV. COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS: SAU-WIDE

SUGGESTIONS:

- Continue to pursue the hiring of staff with LD, MR and EH certifications. Also, encourage current staff with General Special Education certification to obtain LD certification.
- There are facility space issues in all of the schools, the most serious at Madison Elementary. These space problems would be alleviated with approval to build a Junior/Senior High School for the SAU.
- Staff should be certain to write their title/role next to their name when they are signing in at special education meetings (ex. LEA rep., Case Manager/Sped. Teacher, etc.).
- Related service providers should keep copies of IEP goal progress reports in students' special education files.
- Paraprofessionals would benefit from more training on a variety of topics (ex. classroom modifications, roles & responsibilities, knowledge of disabilities, etc.) as well as training on their roles and responsibilities in the classroom.
- Consider adding space to the current IEP and special education forms to allow staff to record whether or not parents received copies of special education paperwork (ex. evaluation reports, notification of parent rights, etc.)
- For students placed out-of-district or for students who have recently moved into the district, keep copies of correspondence to their current/former school in their file, documenting the SAU's attempts to receive their special education paperwork.
- Consider having a special education clerical support person at each building in order to assist special education staff with keeping up-to-date paperwork and organizing files.
- The SAU is encouraged to have building level administrators who can fill the role of LEA representative.

Freedom Elementary School - Preschool Program

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Preschool

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEW: 1 FILE

COMMENDATIONS:

- The preschool staff maintain excellent communication and collaboration with the special education teacher and related service providers.
- The preschool staff receives excellent support from all teachers and administrators at Freedom Elementary School.
- The room used for the preschool and kindergarten programs is child-centered and has appropriate materials.
- The administration is very supportive of the preschool staff's attendance at staff development opportunities outside of the district.
- The preschool special education staffings involve the full team, including the Director of Special Education.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1109.01(b) 1 file: The annual goals contained in the IEP were not measurable.

Ed. 1109.04(a) 1 file: Lacked evidence that parents were given a 10-day notice of the IEP meeting.

Ed. 1123.04(a)(7) 1 file: There was no record of access posted near the special education files.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Consider organizing the preschool files in the same format as the rest of the district's special education files.
- The LEA representative should be sure to identify their role on team meeting minutes/signature page.
- When space and budget allow, consider designating a separate room for the preschool program. Currently the room is shared with the kindergarten program that uses it during the morning, and the staff must rearrange the room to make it more age-appropriate for the preschoolers who arrive in the afternoon.

Freedom Elementary School

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Modified Regular 2) Resource Room

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEW: 3 FILES

COMMENDATIONS:

- The staff and administration are all supportive of special education services in the school.
- The general and special education staff maintain excellent communication with each other.
- A special education program called Alphabetical Phonics has been integrated into the general education classrooms.
- The special education staff are dedicated to student needs.
- The small size of the school and classes promotes a child-centered environment.
- The staff are given many opportunities to attend staff development workshops and conferences outside of the district.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

<u>Ed. 1107.05(k)</u>	1 file: The evaluation was not conducted in 45 days from the parent's consent to evaluate.
<u>Ed. 1107.08(c)</u>	1 file: There was no current LD observation in the file.
<u>Ed. 1107.08(e)</u>	1 file: The evaluator's signature is not on the evaluation summary report.
<u>Ed. 1109.01(b)</u>	2 files: The annual goals on the IEP are not measurable.
<u>Ed. 1109.01(g)</u>	3 files: The location of services was not listed on the IEP.
<u>Ed. 1109.01(n)</u>	1 file: There was no LEA representative signature on the IEP.
<u>Ed. 1109.04(a)</u>	2 files: Parents were not given a 10-day notice of the IEP meeting.
<u>Ed. 1109.11</u>	2 files: There were no progress reports in the files for related services IEP goals.
<u>Ed. 1115.06</u>	1 file: There was no statement indicating that LRE was determined annually.
<u>Ed. 1123.05(2)</u>	3 files: There was no evidence that parents were given their annual notice of rights with the notice of the IEP meeting.
<u>Ed. 1125.04(3-4)</u>	1 file: There was no written consent for placement in the file.
<u>CFR#300.346(a)(1)(iii)</u>	2 files: There was no evidence that state or district-wide assessment results were considered in the IEP development.

Madison Elementary School

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Modified Regular 2) Resource Room

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEW: 3 FILES

COMMENDATIONS:

- The staff and administration are dedicated to, and supportive of special education.
- There is excellent communication between special educators and related service providers.
- The staff appears to make the best use of available space, materials and technology.
- The Summer Writing Lab program has been successful for students.
- The small class sizes allow staff to better address student needs.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

- Ed. 1107.02(d) 1 file: There was no evidence that parents had been given a written notice of the disposition of referral within 15 days.
- Ed. 1107.03(a) 1 file: There was no speech-language pathologist at the evaluation team meeting.
1 file: There was no MR certified teacher at the evaluation meeting.
- Ed. 1107.05(k) 1 file: The evaluation was not completed in 45 days from the parent's written consent.
- Ed. 1109.11(c)(1) 1 file: The IEP progress report did not show the extent to which it is sufficient to achieve the IEP goals by the end of the year.
- Ed. 1111.01 1 file: The extended school year consideration process was not completed by 4/30 or 60 days before starting.
- Ed. 1119.06 The physical space in the Madison Elementary School is not adequate for the provision of special education services.
- Ed. 1123.04(a)(7) There was no record of access posted near the special education files.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Document in the written prior notice or on another form that parents have received copies of all required paperwork (ex. annual notice of rights, IEP progress reports) from referral process through identification.
- Be sure that copies of IEP progress reports from related service providers are kept in student files.
- More paraprofessionals would help support students and their general education teachers in the classroom.
- Special education clerical support, such as a special education secretary, would allow the staff to provide more services to students.
- The LEA representative should be sure to sign their title/role on the team meeting signature page.

Kenneth A. Brett School

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Modified Regular 2) Resource Room

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEW: 3 FILES

COMMENDATIONS:

- The school is very child-centered and staff are dedicated to students' success.
- The paraprofessional staff feel that they are supported and have good communication with the special education teachers.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1107.02(b) 1 file: There was no evidence that parents had been given written notice of the referral.

Ed. 1107.03 1 file: There was no MR certified teacher at the evaluation meeting.

Ed. 1107.05(k) 2 files: There was no evidence that the evaluation was completed within 45 days of the parents written consent.

Ed. 1107.06 2 files: There was no current evaluation written summary report.

Ed. 1107.07(c)(1-3) 2 files: There was no evidence that the following required persons participated in the determination of disability meeting: a teacher certified in the area of suspected disability, an individual knowledgeable about the child, or an LEA representative.

Ed. 1107.08(a) 1 file: There was no evidence that the evaluation team included a person qualified to conduct individualized diagnostic exams.

Ed. 1107.08(e) 2 files: The evaluation summary report was not signed by all evaluation team members.

Ed. 1109.01(d) 1 file: The IEP did not include a statement of the expectation of regular classroom participation.

Ed. 1109.03 1 file: There was no evidence that an LEA Representative attended that evaluation meeting.

1 file: There was no evidence that a parent attended the evaluation meeting.

Ed. 1109.04(a) 1 file: There was no evidence that parents were given a 10-day notice of the IEP meeting.

Ed. 1119.07 Paraprofessionals should not be designing programs or assuming the responsibilities of a teacher.

Ed. 1123.05 2 files: There was no evidence that parents were given their Annual Notice of Rights/Procedural Safeguards at the notice of the IEP meeting.

Kenneth A. Brett School, Continued

Ed. 1125.04(a) 2 files: There was no evidence of a written consent to evaluate in the files.

CFR#300.346(a)(l)(iii) 1 file: There was no evidence that state or district-wide test results were considered in the development of the IEP.

SUGGESTIONS:

- In student files for those students who have transferred from other school districts, include copies of letters to their former school districts requesting the student's special education paperwork in order to document the attempts made to receive this information.
- The special and general education staff would benefit from training on how to effectively use the services of paraprofessionals to provide the best support for students.
- As the Brett school is the largest school in the SAU, it may benefit from having a Special Education administrator or LEA Representative in the building to give daily guidance to the special education staff.
- A special education secretary in the building would help the special education staff to keep files and paperwork organized and up-to-date.
- The paraprofessionals would benefit from training, perhaps upon hiring, outlining their roles and responsibilities in the school.

<p style="text-align: center;">Kennett Junior/Senior High School, North Conway (SAU #13 students)</p>

PROGRAM(S) VISITED:

- 1) Expeditions - Behavioral/EH program
- 2) Resource Room
- 3) Modified Regular

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEW: 3 FILES

COMMENDATIONS:

- The Expeditions (Behavioral/EH) program's summer session and overnight trips provide a positive challenge for EH students.
- The student files were well organized.
- The school makes every effort to include all special education students in NHEIAP testing.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1119.03 One SAU 13 student is not receiving full access to the general secondary education curriculum, because their Academic Support class is scheduled at the same time as their Physical Education class. This prevents the student from attending both classes regularly, and the student usually attends Academic Support in place of Physical Education.

Ed. 1119.04 The Expeditions (Behavior Management) program does not currently have a computer available for student use, although it is a required materials component in an SAU 13 student's IEP.

Ed. 1119.06 The location and physical space of the Expeditions (Behavior Management) program is not sufficient for the provision of special education services. It is located far from the general classrooms in the basement of the high school, and the physical space is unsafe, with many safety hazards in the main space of the program and in their time-out room.

The Language Arts resource room is located in a space that is insufficient in size for the provision of special education services.

SUGGESTIONS:

- The special education teachers would benefit from more time built into their schedules to meet with paraprofessionals to discuss student needs.
- Teachers would benefit from additional training in special education issues, particularly in behavior management techniques and the skills needed to work successfully with EH students.
- Ensure that transition plans indicate who will be responsible for setting up vocational rehabilitation services.

ADDENDUM

JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM

SAU 13

Student File Review

Case Study Document

Reimbursement Claim Form

Case Study Addendum Form

<p style="text-align: center;">ADDENDUM JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM</p>

SAU 13

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 1 FILE

COMMENDATIONS:

- It is evident that SAU 13 maintains an active participation in the educational decisions of their court placed student.
- The student's record was well organized.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1107.06(a) There was no current evaluation summary report in the file.

Ed. 1109.01(b) The Pine Haven School's IEP needs to comply with the current federal regulations requiring measurable annual goals with benchmarks or objectives.

Ed. 1109.01(h) The Pine Haven School's IEP must indicate the length of school year and length of school day.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Put a record of disclosure inside each individual file as opposed to keeping a disclosure notebook for all the files contained in the filing cabinet.
- Consider asking private facilities to use the SAU's own IEP format for their student placed in the facility, or add the necessary required forms to the private facility's IEP format in order to maintain compliance with the state and federal requirements for IEPs.